

August 2010
The Centennial of Blessed Mother Teresa's Birth.
Celebrated August 28th 5pm
St. Augustine Church – Newark, New Jersey

Through the centuries, God has raised up saints – ordinary people accepting the call to be His instruments here on earth. On August 26th, 1910, God raised up a woman who would become a great disciple – a woman who would fall in love with God. Her birth name was Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu. Today we know her as Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta. This month of August 2010 we celebrate the 100th year of her birth.

Mother Teresa's first call from God was a vocation as a Loreto sister, acting as a principal of a Catholic school in Calcutta, India. On September 10th, 1946, while on a train ride to a retreat in the north, Mother received the "call within a call" which would give rise to the Missionaries of Charity. Mother clearly heard the voice of Jesus say....

"My little one, come, come, carry me into the holes of the poor. Come, be My light. I cannot go alone. They don't know Me, so they don't want Me. You come, go amongst them. Carry Me with you into them. How I long to enter their holes, their dark, unhappy homes."

Thus began Mother Teresa's quest to start a new religious order. On October 7th, 1950, with much patience and the permission of Church authority, Mother Teresa established the Society of the Missionaries of Charity.

Today there are 4000 plus sisters of many nationalities, 900 plus missions around the world. The Missionary of Charity family has grown. The order now includes active and contemplative sisters, active and contemplative brothers, priests, sick and suffering co-workers, Lay Missionaries of Charity (LMC's) and volunteers.

In answer to the words of Jesus "what you have done to the least of my brothers, you did it to me" (Matt 25) the Missionaries of Charity make a promise of "wholehearted and free service to the poorest of the poor." This promise is manifested in many different ways i.e., soup kitchens, homeless shelters, religious education, homes for unwed mothers and AID's patients and much more. From the beginning of the order, the Missionaries of Charity have maintained a strong pro-life stance. In Mother's own words ***"If you hear of some woman who does not want to keep her child and wants to have an abortion, try to persuade her to bring him to me. I will love that child, seeing in him the sign of God's love"***.

Reflecting on the life of this remarkable woman, it brings to mind October 16, 1978, the day when Cardinal Karol Wojtyla was chosen to become Pope John Paul II. His words to us that day were **"Be not afraid."** These are also the words of Mother Teresa. Do not be afraid to follow Jesus. Trust in Him. John Paul II called Mother Teresa "an icon of the Good Samaritan."

The Missionaries of Charity operate a mission in Newark, New Jersey, which is in close proximity to our parish of St. Thomas the Apostle. Here the sisters run a soup kitchen, a woman's shelter, CCD, and children's summer camp. The sisters are very happy to have people volunteer to help with the work. Without volunteers this work would be practically impossible. Pray about it. Maybe this is the time for YOU to step out of your comfort zone – to become an MC volunteer – to “Trust in God.” Don't be surprised if you fall in love with God.

“Love one another as God loves each one of you. Jesus came to give us the Good News that God loves us and that He wants us to love one another. And when the time comes to die and go home to God again, we will hear Him say, “Come and possess the Kingdom of prepared for you, because I was hungry and you gave me to eat, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me. Whatever you did to the least of my brethren, you did it to me.”

Brian Murphy